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Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Statement made by Myanmar on behalf of the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations on the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok)

1. At the outset, I should like to extend the warmest congratulations of the Member States of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to you on your unanimous election as Chairman of the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We pledge our fullest cooperation in the advancement of the work of the Preparatory Committee at its first session.

2. It is the conviction of the ASEAN Member States that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States in the regions concerned and nuclear-weapon-free countries in various parts of the world constitutes an effective measure for limiting the geographic proliferation of nuclear weapons, enhances regional peace and security, and contributes to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

3. We believe that the establishment of the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone, as an essential component of the zone of peace, freedom and neutrality, will contribute towards strengthening the security of States within the zone and towards enhancing international peace and security as a whole.

4. Recalling the Decision on "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament", adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, we stress that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapon States and their respect and support for the relevant Protocols is important for the maximum effectiveness of this nuclear-weapon-free-zone Treaty and its relevant Protocols.

5. In that respect, the ASEAN Member States have taken a major step by establishing the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone through the conclusion of the Treaty of Bangkok on 15 December 1995. The Treaty has entered into force with effect from 27 March 1997.

6. However, the Protocol to the Treaty is yet to be accepted and ratified by the nuclear-weapon States.

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7. ASEAN Foreign Ministers in July 2001 welcomed the progress in the implementation of the Treaty of Bangkok and stressed the importance of direct consultation between ASEAN and the five nuclear-weapon States and considered this a significant mark of progress towards encouraging the accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok. In that connection, we welcome the first direct consultation between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States in Hanoi on 19 May 2001 and have reaffirmed our support for this process and call for continued consultations with the nuclear-weapon States.

8. We reaffirm our vision and conviction that the entry into force of the Treaty of Bangkok and, eventually, of its Protocol will make a significant contribution to the enhancement of regional and global peace and security, to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and the advancement of nuclear disarmament, and to the achievement of the ultimate objective of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world.

9. We express our desire to see the Protocol to the Treaty of Bangkok accepted and ratified by the nuclear-weapon States and its entry into force at the earliest possible date. To that end, we urge the nuclear-weapon States to show firm resolve and maximum flexibility and to work together with us in a spirit of amity and cooperation with a view to finding solutions to the remaining issues in the shortest possible time.

10. Finally, I wish to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Preparatory Committee.